

Listing of claims:

The following is a complete listing of all claims in the application, with an indication of the status of each:

- 1 1 (Currently amended). A vessel agitator assembly for a chemical analyzer,
2 comprising:
3 a conveyor element which includes a plurality of vessel holders, each
4 of said plurality of vessel holders being capable of holding ~~holds~~ a vessel
5 which is selectively removable therefrom ~~plurality of vessels~~, said conveyor
6 element being moveable along a path; and
7 a vessel agitator positioned adjacent said conveyor element at a
8 location along said path where said vessel is passively agitated through
9 ~~plurality of vessels~~ contact with said vessel agitator as said conveyor element
10 moves along said path.
- 1 2 (Currently Amended). ~~A The~~ vessel agitator assembly for a chemical
2 analyzer, comprising:
3 a conveyor element which holds a plurality of vessels, said conveyor
4 element being moveable along a path; and
5 a vessel agitator positioned adjacent said conveyor element at a
6 location along said path where said plurality of vessels contact said vessel
7 agitator as said conveyor element moves along said path, and as recited in
8 ~~claim 1~~ wherein said vessel agitator includes a plurality of troughs and
9 projections, whereby each of said plurality of vessels are caused to move in a
10 direction generally perpendicular to toward and away from said path by said
11 plurality of troughs and projections.
- 1 3 (Original). The vessel agitator assembly for a chemical analyzer as recited in
2 claim 2, wherein vessel agitator is made from more than one component.

1 4 (Original). The vessel agitator assembly for a chemical analyzer as recited in
2 claim 2, wherein distances between adjacent troughs in said vessel agitator is
3 variable.

1 5 (Original). The vessel agitator assembly for a chemical analyzer as recited in
2 claim 2, wherein distances between adjacent projections in said vessel agitator
3 is variable.

1 6 (Original). The vessel agitator assembly for a chemical analyzer as recited in
2 claim 2, wherein distances between adjacent troughs in said vessel agitator is
3 uniform.

1 7 (Original). The vessel agitator assembly for a chemical analyzer as recited in
2 claim 2, wherein distances between adjacent projections in said vessel agitator
3 is uniform.

1 8 (Original). The vessel agitator assembly for a chemical analyzer as recited in
2 claim 2, wherein a depth of troughs of said vessel agitator relative to said
3 conveyor is variable.

1 9 (Currently amended). The vessel agitator assembly for a chemical analyzer
2 as recited in claim 2, wherein a distance said projections project toward said
3 ~~vessel agitator relative to~~ said conveyor is variable.

1 10 (Original). The vessel agitator assembly for a chemical analyzer as recited
2 in claim 2, wherein a depth of troughs of said vessel agitator relative to said
3 conveyor is uniform.

1 11 (Original). The vessel agitator assembly for a chemical analyzer as recited
2 in claim 2, wherein said agitator assembly has a same number of bumps as a
3 number of vessel holders of said conveyor element.

1 12 (Currently amended). The vessel agitator assembly for a chemical analyzer
2 as recited in claim 2, wherein a distance said projections project toward said
3 ~~vessel agitator relative to~~ said conveyor is uniform.

1 13 (Currently amended). The vessel agitator assembly for a chemical analyzer
2 as recited in claim 2 ~~1~~, wherein said vessel agitator is stationary.

1 14 (Currently amended). The vessel agitator assembly for a chemical analyzer
2 as recited in claim 1, wherein a height of said vessel agitator relative to a
3 height of said conveyor element is adjustable.

1 15 (Original). The vessel agitator assembly for a chemical analyzer as recited
2 in claim 1, wherein said path has one or more turns.

1 16 (Original). The vessel agitator assembly for a chemical analyzer as recited
2 in claim 13, further comprising means for allowing the conveyor to follow a
3 path which is nonlinear.

1 17 (Original). The vessel agitator assembly for a chemical analyzer as recited
2 in claim 1, further comprising a housing, said conveyor and said vessel
3 agitator being positioned within said housing.

1 18 (Currently amended). The vessel agitator assembly for a chemical analyzer
2 as recited in claim 17 ~~16~~, wherein said vessel agitator is affixed to said
3 housing.

1 19 (Currently amended). The vessel agitator assembly for a chemical analyzer
2 of claim 17 ~~16~~, wherein said housing is insulated.

1 20 (Original). The vessel agitator assembly for a chemical analyzer of claim 1,
2 wherein said chemical analyzer is an immunoassay analyzer.

1 21 (Currently amended). The vessel agitator assembly for a chemical analyzer
2 of claim 20 ~~19~~, wherein said conveyor and said vessel agitator are positioned
3 within an incubator in said immunoassay analyzer.

1 22 (Currently amended). A method of passively agitating vessels in a chemical
2 analyzer, comprising the steps of:
3 conveying one or more vessels held in a conveyor element along a
4 path; and
5 agitating said vessels with a stationary vessel agitator positioned
6 adjacent said conveyor element at a location along said path where said one or
7 more plurality of vessels contact said stationary vessel agitator as said
8 conveyor element moves along said path, wherein said stationary vessel
9 agitator includes a plurality of troughs and projections, whereby each of said
10 one or more vessels are caused to move in a direction generally perpendicular
11 toward and away from said path by said plurality of troughs and projections.

1 23. (New) The method of claim 22 wherein said step of conveying is
2 performed using a belt which has a plurality of vessel holders associated
3 therewith which selectively hold each of said one or more vessels.

1 24. (New) The vessel agitator assembly for a chemical analyzer as recited in
2 claim 1 wherein said conveyor element includes a belt to which said plurality
3 of vessel holders are connected, and wherein said belt is positioned on said
path.